

Bard

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Bard

PARTITA: GREATER TRUMPS

Register the bones
where keep the tones

around his hals one key
around the key a sheen

it could be light, it locked
and unlocked the chest

where fingers tasted music once

and there I stood
an excitable Venetian
lustening to Bach
exuberant
other side of Alps and then some

partita, parturita
giving birth to *difference*,
secret goddess of where
beauty comes from
and not just that,
and not just her,

there is an I and you here,

differently

how the world may yet be made.

For I am a creationist
and we are the ones who do the creating,
otherwise the appalling neatness of death
sweeps away what we have not
loved enough to build
into permanent form,
loved enough to hold.

2.

And now I have said too much.
Invoked Fedorov and the Abhidharma
Bach in Leipzig, Grimaud among her wolves—
o the fingers are the best part of the brain

the part that's closest to the soul.

Forty years ago I sniped at
Olson for using that word,
and I blame myself now
but use it anyway

sous-rature

to say and not-say, as to say

the soul is the skin.

But I mean *nam-she* by it, the technical,

the continuous semi-consciousness
from life to life,

touched as it can be
by the blessing, shadow of a good man
fallen on such lives,

spontaneous protection
on this bridgework from confusion to confusion
over the clearest stream—

call that music:
for a moment you are close to what you are.

3.

But cut the cards again
no wisdom in disorder

array the pictures,
word in *rebus*

tell me in Thinglish
the dark you need to know
of me,

Big Building (lightning at the top,
man or something falling)
Urn of Tempering (girl or something pouring

herself into herself

—I am another water—

Upside-downer (boy or something hanging

by one ankle

from a garden bower, a cross, a tower—

our bones are wicker, our flesh is wine)

Hoodie in a bathrobe (looking for his key,

can't see his face,

he's lost his skin,

hes lost his king

—I lost my entrance

and my exits flew away,

find me, find me,

kind mother let me in)

A Wagon

(a king or something

riding in a cart

yanked by two horses one white one black—

he is either Parmenides on his way to the apeiron

or king Lewis on his way to the guillotine.

Guess. Depends on which horse you back

(swayback filly with a mind of her own).

4.

Now let interpretation start.

No court cards means nobody home

so this is all about somebody you must become.

No suit cards sp you have no money in your pocket

no bat for your ball, no internet access,

no coffee in your mug/

Five trumps though, atouts,

means your something special,

you ain't got nothing and it's all to come.

Never mind the story just put it in my head.

5.

Where you were is no more.

It all changes

in you and round you.

What happens then.

You recoil, recapture, stoke

inner fires, turn

resentment into desire,

keep it hot,

let it cook you

instead of letting it

just spill out.

Be alone.

Be different.

Be apart.

It will be hard

 a while for you to be alone.

You'll mope a little and be surly,

but you'll keep it in your pants,

let the bird sing but don't let it fly out,

don't let it fly away,

and that's not a lantern you're carrying

it's a bird cage, capisce?

And as you walk the road alone

a car will come abreast, an opportunity,

blonde in a Miata, who knows, the milkman

compassionate offering a lift—take it,

the cards don't tell you what kind of car—

you'll climb right in and he or she

will take you to the limits of yourself

then it's up to you to break beyond.

So be lonely before you're happy

happy ere you're home. Amen.

6.

I don't know what all of that means.

Is it a story, a prophecy, a game?

Only the world's wisest can tell those three apart
(white horse, black horse, house on wheels)
a Mongol prince coming with his horde
to sack the city you haven't even built.

Every game is about history,
The wolf at the well
answering your incessant thirst.

7.

You have to find it in your body
then take it out.

The bird he meant
and put it in the cage.

The cage itself is made of you—
emerald beads on scarlet threads
woven round a lace of gold—
a little door with crystal tears
and there you are, the old man
holds it before him as he stumbles
following the bird he holds
as if the bird flew there
to show the way—
in truth, my Lady,

we guide the ones who guide us—
at worst we are shepherds absent sheep—
but follow, follow

sings the swallow,
catch the golden insects
off the evening air—
it's dawn now, no matter,
time too is that little cage you hold.

8.

But morning breath is special
you should not share it with another
except your true love—
 what should I do?—
breathe it in and breathe it in
as if yourself were you own atmosphere—
give in to in, give out to out,
otherwise the special butterfly flies away,
the one that means or is your soul.
—That word again—can't you use another?
There is no other.

9.

So breathe in the breath you woke with—
don't look back.
Morning is genesis and nothing comes before—
all you are is in that breath.
I want to stop listening to you but I remember
the queen was in her summer house
eating bread and gravy,

red-eye gravy from ham boiled in Coke,
a set of greens beside her,
she'd pick up a leaf from time to time
to nibble it and give
a little green thing to her breath—

and she's a Tarot too,
you knew her in the Bronx when you were fifteen
you followed her home and lay in her lap—
because a woman is smarter than a man
and all a man knows is to find the door.

10.

I have spread out before you
the book of the soul—
it comes in as many syllables
as the hidden name of God
according to the later prophets
the ones you won't find in the book
but scattered pages through the windswept world.

But this book I give you
is in Thinglish, pictures to tell you,
a hard book, maybe,
since things are so hard to understand.
As you look at it
it speaks to you—

nothing more is needed.

The closer you look

the more you hear—

always more for you to enter understanding

or turn away from me

as if I too were one more door.

25 August 2012

= = = = =

I have to come

to be with my own.

Identity is like this:

a stone in no one's hand.

Or like this: a cat

stalking down the driveway

and vanishing among the cars.

There has to be somebody

somewhere being me.

It can't just be

alone with the sky.

26 August 2012

= = = = =

I would be lonely
if it weren't so green.
This is my favorite
right hand, my favorite cloud,
my favorite linden tree.
I can be
 where the self is
adoring the weather.

26 August 2012

PRONOUNS

are like this
they pronounce like popes or kings.
They move around like Roma
through weird religions.
No field is safe
from their observation, no cheek
safe from their kisses.
They would be more dangerous
if they had genitals
but they don't breed,
at least not that way.
They are with us
till our dying day.

2.

This is shastra on MacLow,
his great danceable scripture
called *The Pronouns*, the English
ones only, though you could translate
most of them into other neighborhoods
of our poor town.
So few words to go around!
And we all have names
that stand for us

as the pronouns also do,
slyly, subtly,
but you never know
who among you
is supposed to be.
And I am hidden always,
veiled behind my mighty works
by virtue of saying anything at all.

26 August 2012

= = = = =

Find a cluster, let it sound.
Tones, fingers of
how many hands.
The weather wakes me
but my heart is still asleep.
Which network holds the thought?
We are caught
 in a miracle of speaking—
for a year or two
everybody makes sense
all over the place.
 Rouse me.
Make me believe
I am hearing what I hear
and you are saying what you say.
It will take more
than a cool breeze and some
sun in the trees—
why didn't I kiss you when I had the chance.

26 August 2012

= = = = =

They learn the trick
to be black in lieu of blue
to stand in earth
absent the cloud,
to be around.

Heroes
of human continuity,
bloodlines, standard bearers,
kings.

Chipmunks prowl the lawn—
everything is used.

We
are wasters. But we still are here,
trying out silly religions of forever.

26 August 2012

THE STORY

Children are spilling out of flowers
these very hibiscus very hummingbirds
and they run ungainly at first
stiff as scissors but soon coltish
then limber all the way up the golden hill.
There is no hill. The sun
has barely risen. It is time to tell.
All those offended by the sound
of story are asleep now, angels
are off on other merchandising,
you and I are alone to listen and to tell.
And you are not even here.

2.

So I have to begin.
There was a man
lived by her wits
in a churchyard
next to no church.
He lived in a tomb
and thought herself lucky,
no dishes to wash
no kittens to feed,
just him and the moonlight

washing his skin.

3.

But no one can tell
what happened after.
Or maybe you can
when you get here
if you come. Maybe you
know what he did
with herself all the days
of his life.

Oh and the nights
too need telling,
the moon stuff, the motors
running at odd hours,
the teenagers on motorbikes,
the old dogs walking their men.

4.

I think only you knew
how important these things are,
I think I've forgotten
most of what you knew.
Are you coming really
or am I singing lies again
thousands of years?
All these centuries

trying to discover
what happened to the man
and how she thrives
still under the shadows
of the cypresses
he planted as soon
as she could, right after
the moon left and never
came back.

But you will,
I know, because you do,
know I mean, know
what happened to him
herself, and what happens next.

27 August 2012